



Rattlesnake Safety

One creature that strikes fear into most hikers is the rattlesnake. Assume any snake is dangerous, and leave it alone to slither away.

HIKER CAUTIONS:

Stay on designated trails and roads.

Snakes are easier to see in these open areas and are more likely to avoid them altogether.

Most snakes bite people's ankles and hands.

Use caution when walking, hiking, or working around rattlesnake habitats.

Prime snake areas include rock and wood piles, tall grass, and leaf and vegetation litter.

Wear sturdy, high boots (preferably leather) and loose-fitting long pants in these areas.

Avoid moving rocks, branches, or timbers.

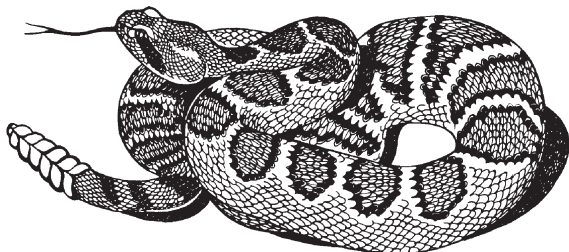
Use caution sitting on the ground or on rocks.

Never try to pick up or handle any snake.

Rattlesnakes may lose their rattles or may not yet have developed them; just because a snake lacks a rattle does not mean it is harmless.

Killing snakes is prohibited in the park.

Please report all sightings to park staff.



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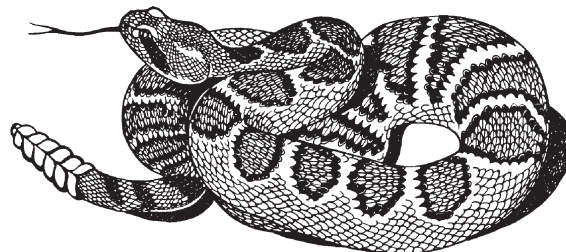
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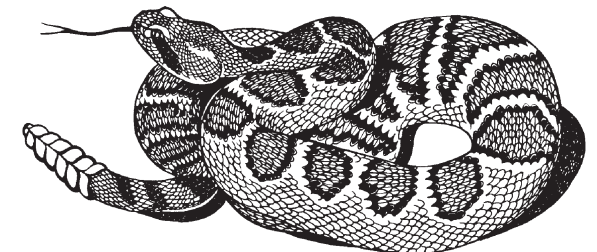
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WHAT TO DO IF YOU OR SOMEONE ELSE IS BITTEN:

- **Call 911** for emergency medical response.
- **Stay calm** and keep the victim still.
- **Remove clothing** around the bite.
- **Allow any blood to flow** freely for 15–30 seconds before cleaning or bandaging.
- **Do not use tourniquets or suction** to extract venom, thereby risking further tissue damage.
- **Avoid strenuous activity**—including walking or running—if possible.
- **Keep the bite area immobilized** below the victim's heart.

If the rattlesnake has injected its venom, panic, motion, and increased heart rate can make the situation worse. However, as many as 50% of rattlesnake bites are “dry bites” where no venom is injected.

To avoid shock, which deprives the organs of blood flow, medical attention should be received as soon as possible.

Description:

- Rattlesnakes living in state parks are native Western rattlesnakes (*Crotalus oreganus*) or a subspecies—beneficial but venomous.
- Adults range from 15 to more than 50" long.
- They blend well with their surroundings and can be any color; most are brown-toned but can range from yellow to black.
- Each has a triangular head, with a patterned back and narrower neck.
- Adults have button-like rattles on their blunt tails.

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